Utilization of Technology in Empowering Entitlement Workers to Promote Social Justice

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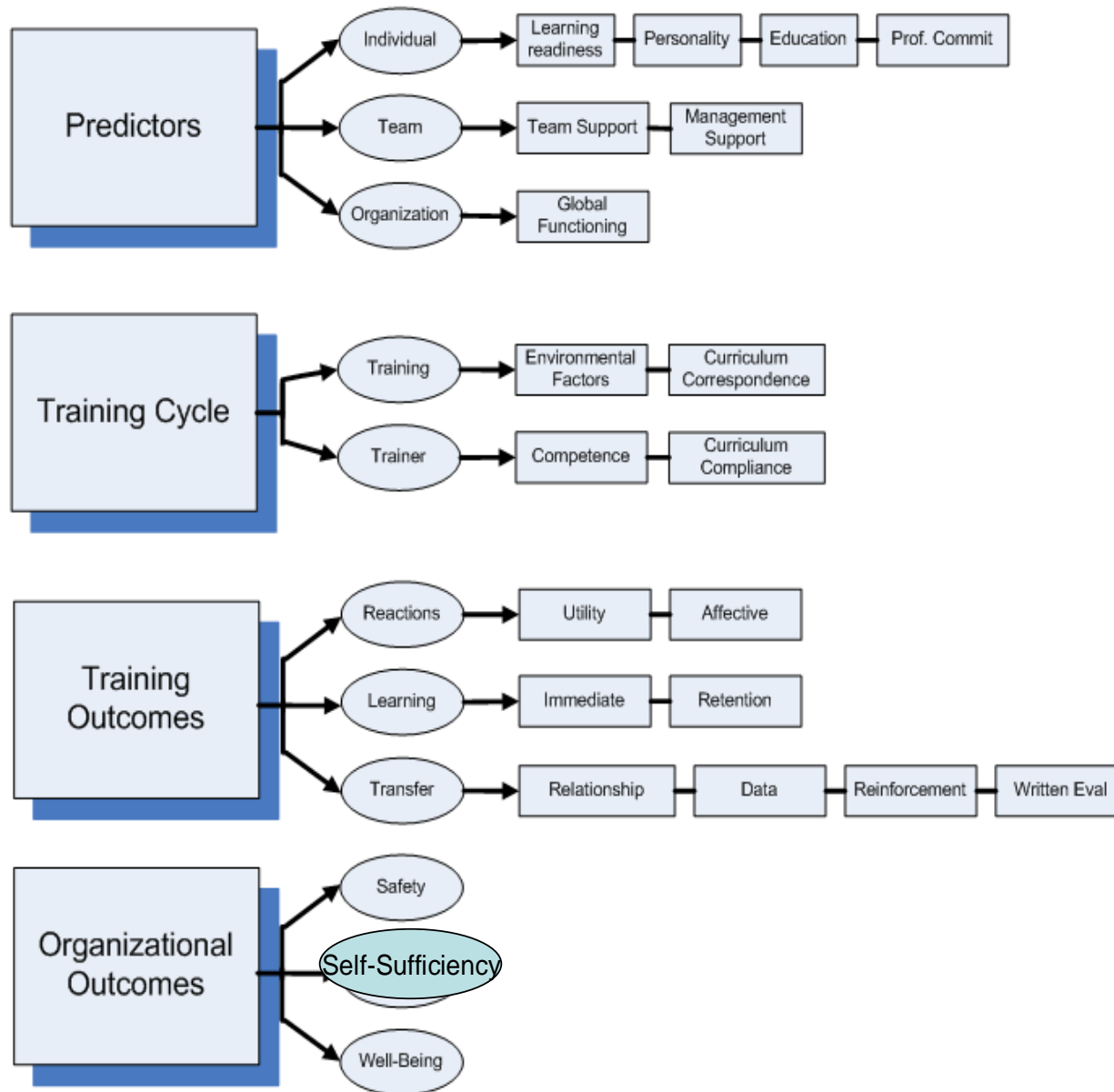# Training Entitlement Workers

- Staff who administer programs including Food Benefits, TANF and Medicaid must work with families who are experiencing a variety of issues, including poverty, violence, and chemical dependency.

- Training needs to focus on how to work collaboratively with families.

Background

- This study builds on Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Evaluation (1959).
  - 4 levels: satisfaction, learning, transfer to the job, and organizational outcomes.
- This model has been expanded and applied to the evaluation of child welfare training for more than a decade (Antle, 2002; Barbee & Antle, 2003).
- One predictor of transfer of learning is the gain in knowledge following training.

Louisville Training Evaluation Model

Predictors
- Individual → Learning readiness → Personality → Education → Prof. Commit
- Team → Team Support → Management Support
- Organization → Global Functioning

Training Cycle
- Training → Environmental Factors → Curriculum Correspondence
- Trainer → Competence → Curriculum Compliance

Training Outcomes
- Reactions → Utility → Affective
- Learning → Immediate → Retention
- Transfer → Relationship → Data → Reinforcement → Written Eval

Organizational Outcomes
- Safety
- Self-Sufficiency
- Well-Being

Training Evaluation

- This model has also been applied to the training evaluation of eligibility workers in the areas of
  - Food Benefits
  - TANF
  - Medicaid
- These courses are provided jointly through state universities and the agency, an extension of the partnerships in child welfare that many states have.
- This partnership with social work helps emphasizes core social work values in training.

University Partnership

The university assists the state trainers with

- Curriculum development
- Developing pre- and post-tests of training content
- Writing behavioral anchors that align with each curriculum
- Providing feedback to trainers and administrators on evaluation measures

Training Methods

- Trainings have 2 components:
  - Field-based learning (both before the first week and between weeks in the classroom)
  - Two weeks in the classroom
- Online components enhance training and learning reinforcement
- Utilization of technology is very important to the design of these trainings

Utilization of Technology in Training Design

- Computer-based exercises and assignments are given before training and for the weeks between the classroom sessions
- Pre-tests are taken online
- Post-tests taken online allow for immediate feedback and learning reinforcement
- Open communication with trainer
  - Trainees and trainers communicate online
  - Conference call with supervisors

Purpose of the Study

- Evaluate training of entitlement program workers

Methodology

- Pre- and post-tests of training content are taken on Blackboard.
- Pre-training questionnaires are administered online via a secure server
  - Measures include
    - Personality, Supervisor support for training, Learning readiness
- Post-training satisfaction questionnaires are administered online
- 3 months post-training the workers complete a survey via phone to rate how they have been able to apply the training on the job

Results

- Participation

- Sample

  - during FY 04-05, 261 Family Support workers (out of a possible 329 for a response rate of 80%) participated in any part of the evaluation

  - For FY 05-06, July-December 05, 151 Family Support workers have participated thus far out of 159 for a participation rate of 95%.

Predictor Variables

Training Transfer Inventory: Team Learning Conditions

- Total Possible Score = 155
- Adult Medical (n=11) Mean=50.1 (SD = 16.1)
- Food Benefits (n=29) Mean=55.2 (SD=6.1)
- TANF (n=6) Mean=52.5 (SD=5.4)

Legend:
- TLC AMA
- TLC FB
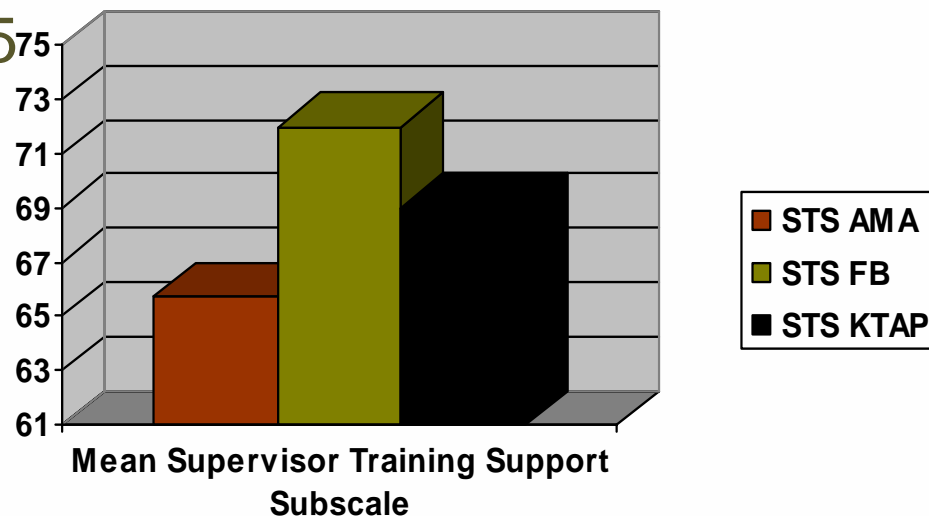- TLC KTAP

Mean Team Learning Conditions Subscale
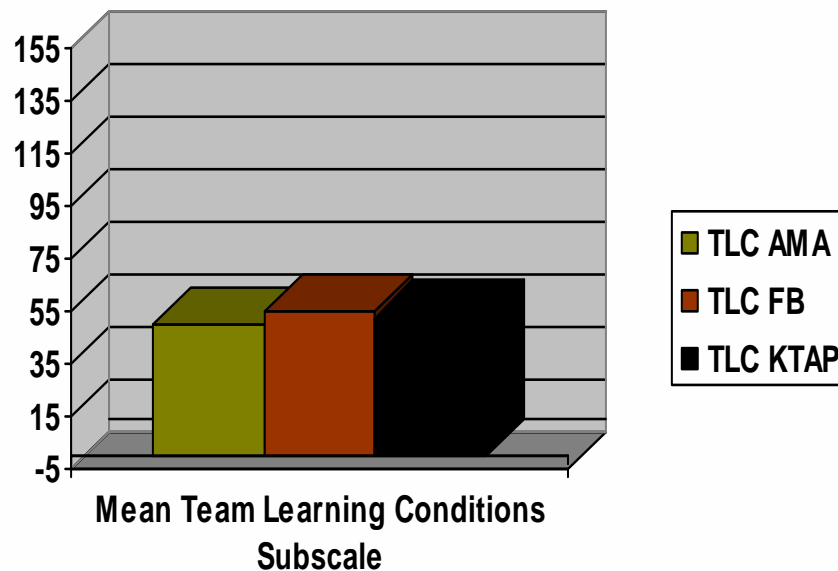
Predictor Variables

Training Transfer Inventory: Supervisor Support

- Total Possible Score = 75
- Adult Medical (n=8)
  Mean=65.8 (SD = 12.1)
- Food Benefits (n=27)
 Mean=72 (SD=10.7)
  TANF (n=6)
- Mean=69 (SD=6.6)

Mean Supervisor Training Support Subscale

Legend:
- STS AMA
- STS FB
- STS KTAP

Predictor Variables

Personality

- Measured by the Big 5 personality scale (Goldberg, 1992), which contains 40 total items that range from scores of 1-5 with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree that the participant portrays a certain personality trait (by self-report).

- The scale is broken down into five subscales, which are extraversion, openness to new experiences, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotionality.

Predictor Variables

- The average rating of conscientiousness was 4.1 for Adult Medical, 4.2 for Food Benefits, and 4.0 for TANF.

- The average rating of agreeableness was also high: 4.3 for Adult Medical, 4.6 for Food Benefits, and 4.5 for TANF.

- **Previous research has shown that conscientiousness relates to productivity on the job.**
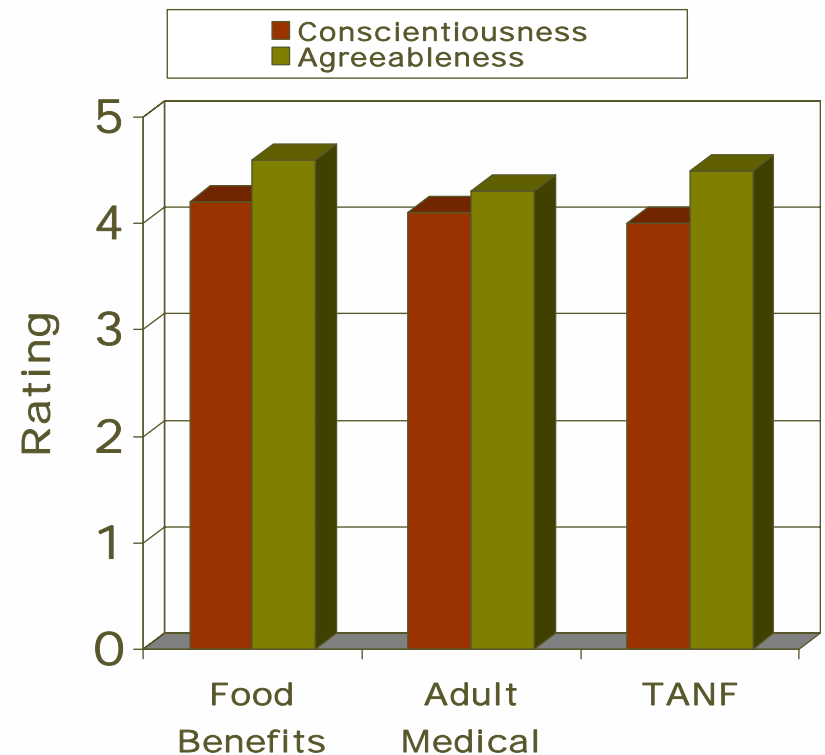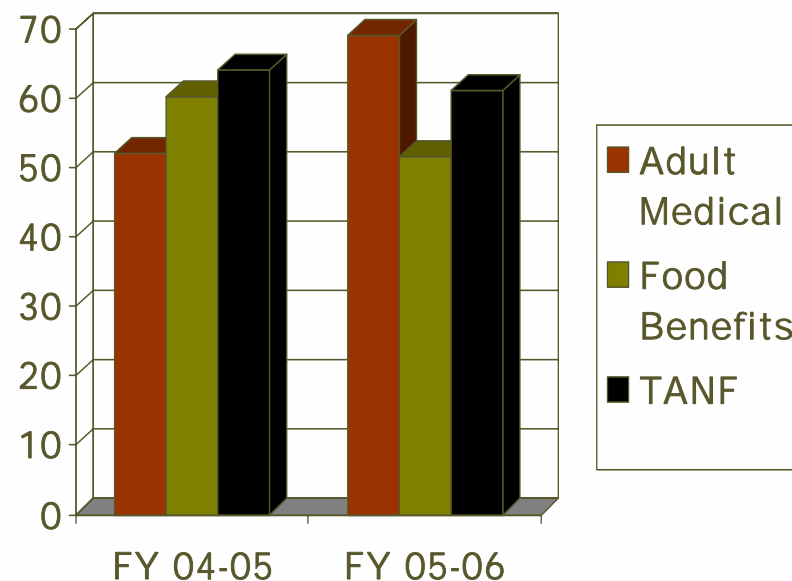
Post-Training Questionnaire: Training Satisfaction

- FY '04-'05
  - Adult Medical=52
  - Food Benefits=60
  - TANF=64
- FY '05-'06 to date
  - Adult Medical=69
  - Food Benefits=51.6
  - TANF=61

**15 items measuring Utility
Highest Possible Score = 75**

Legend:
- Adult Medical
- Food Benefits
- TANF

Categories: FY 04-05, FY 05-06

Level 2: Knowledge of Training Content (FY '04-'05)

Adult Medical (n = 42)

- Pre-test Average =61% (SD = 17.1), Post-test Average =84.8% (SD = 9.9)

Food Benefits (n = 122)

- Pre-test Average = 53% (SD = 10), Post-test Average = 81.3% (SD = 14.4)

TANF (n = 55)

- Pre-test Average = 64.9% (SD =19.5), Post-test Average -= 83.5% (SD = 10.5)
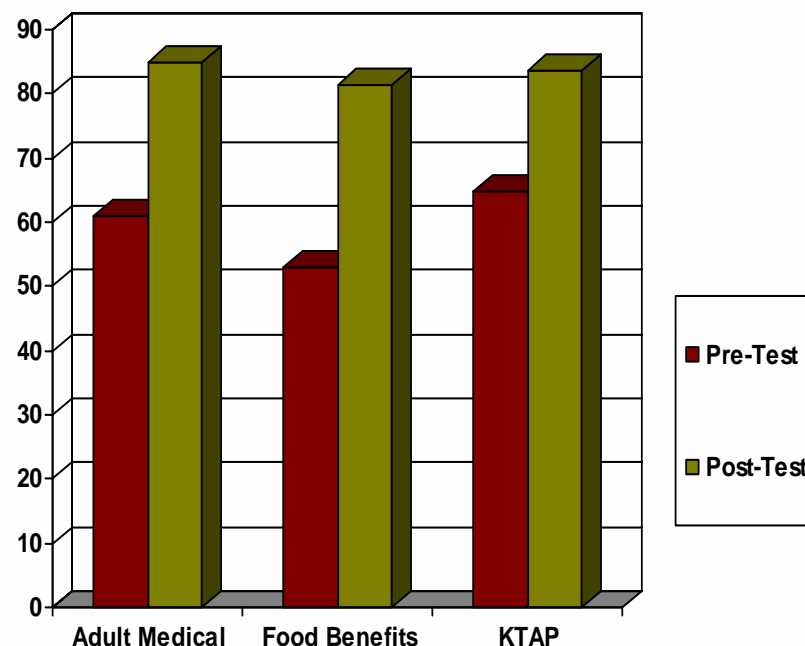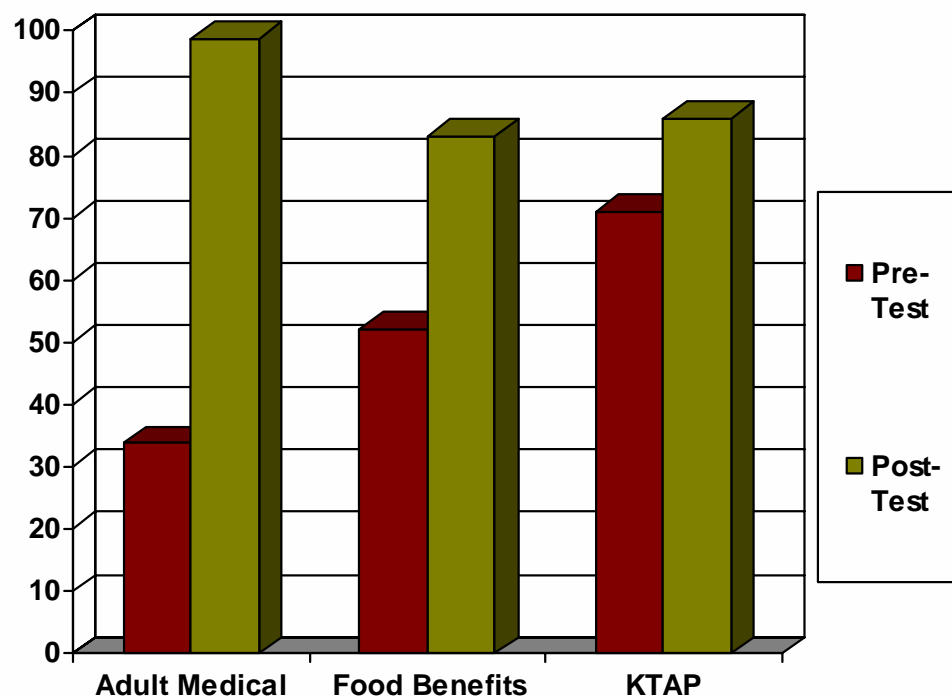
Level 2:
Knowledge of Training Content

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for Adult Medical, $\underline{t}$ (41) =-7.858, p<.0001

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for Food Benefits, $\underline{t}$ (121) =-20.380, p<.0001

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for TANF, $\underline{t}$ (54) = -6.945, p<.0001

Level 2: Knowledge of Training Content
(FY '05-'06 July - December)

• Adult Medical (n = 24) Pre-test Average =33.8% (SD = 1.13), Post-test Average =98.6% (SD = 1.1)

• Food Benefits (n = 69) Pre-test Average = 52% (SD = 1.5), Post-test Average = 83% (SD = 2.1)

• TANF (n = 58) Pre-test Average = 71% (SD =1.3), Post-test Average = 86% (SD = 1.5)

Level 2: Knowledge of Training Content July – December 2005

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for Adult Medical, $\underline{t}$ (1) =-41.774, p<.05

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for Food Benefits, $\underline{t}$ (3) =-9.561, p<.001

- Significant difference pre- to post-test for TANF, $\underline{t}$ (4) = -9.472, p<.001
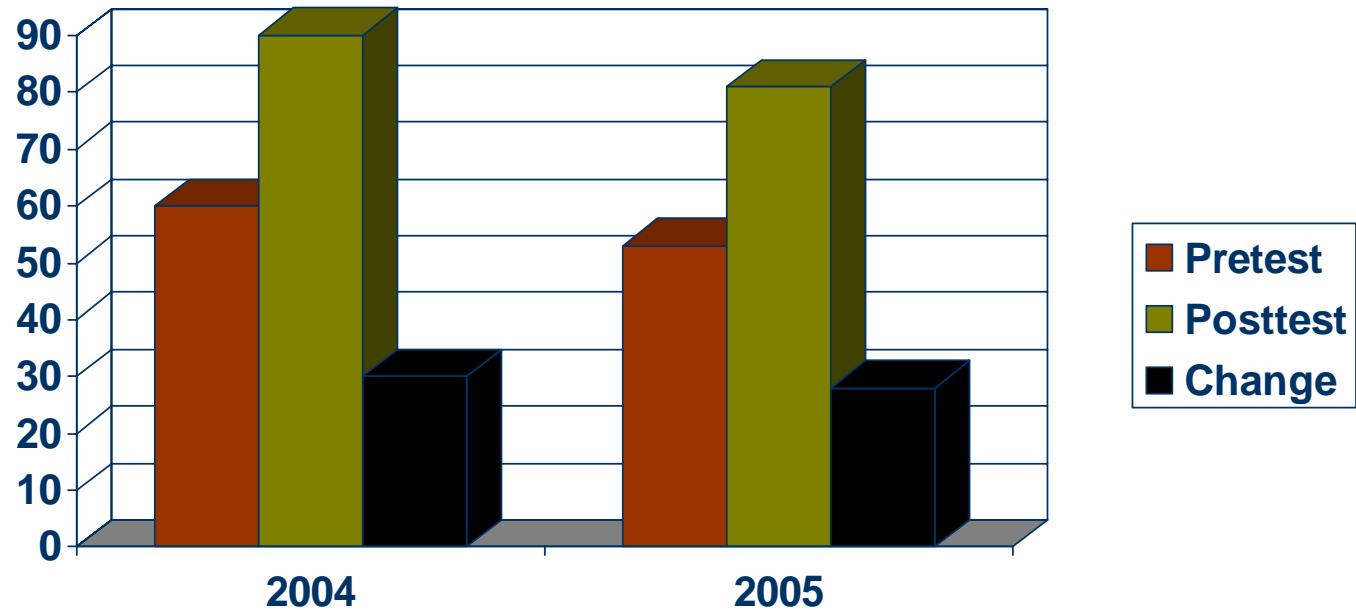
Change over Time: AMA

The AMA pre-post scores have held fairly steady over a 4 year period.
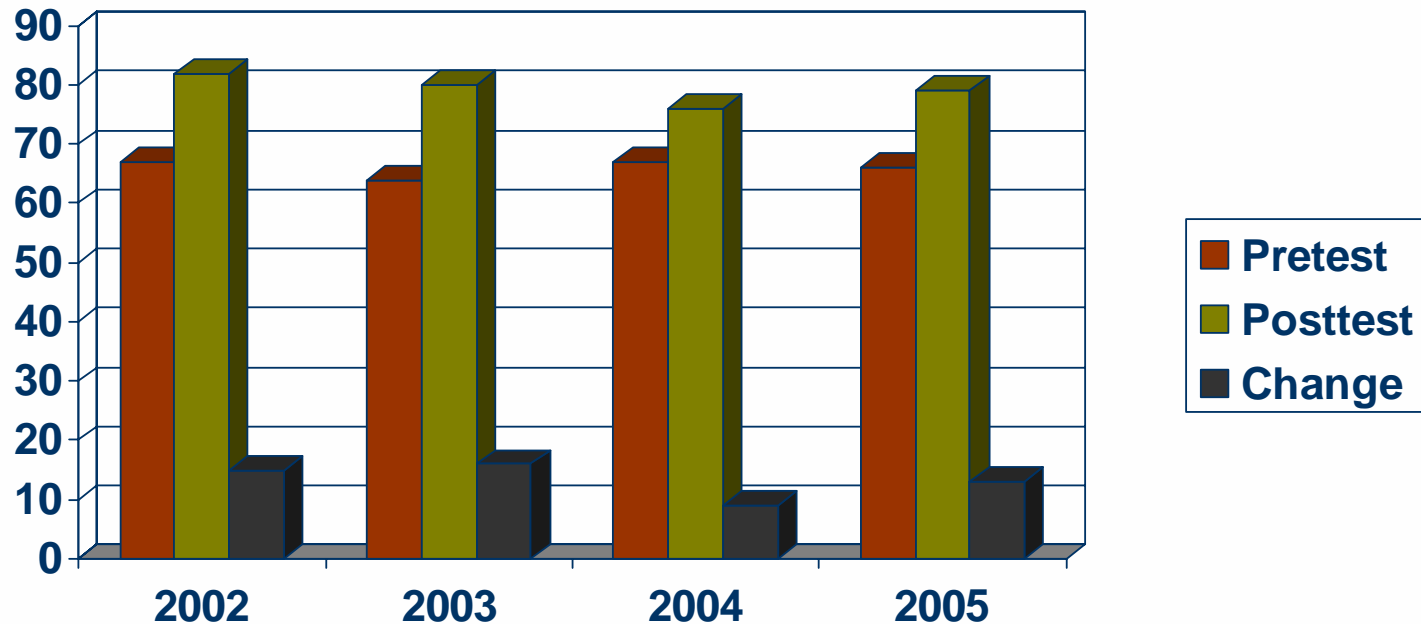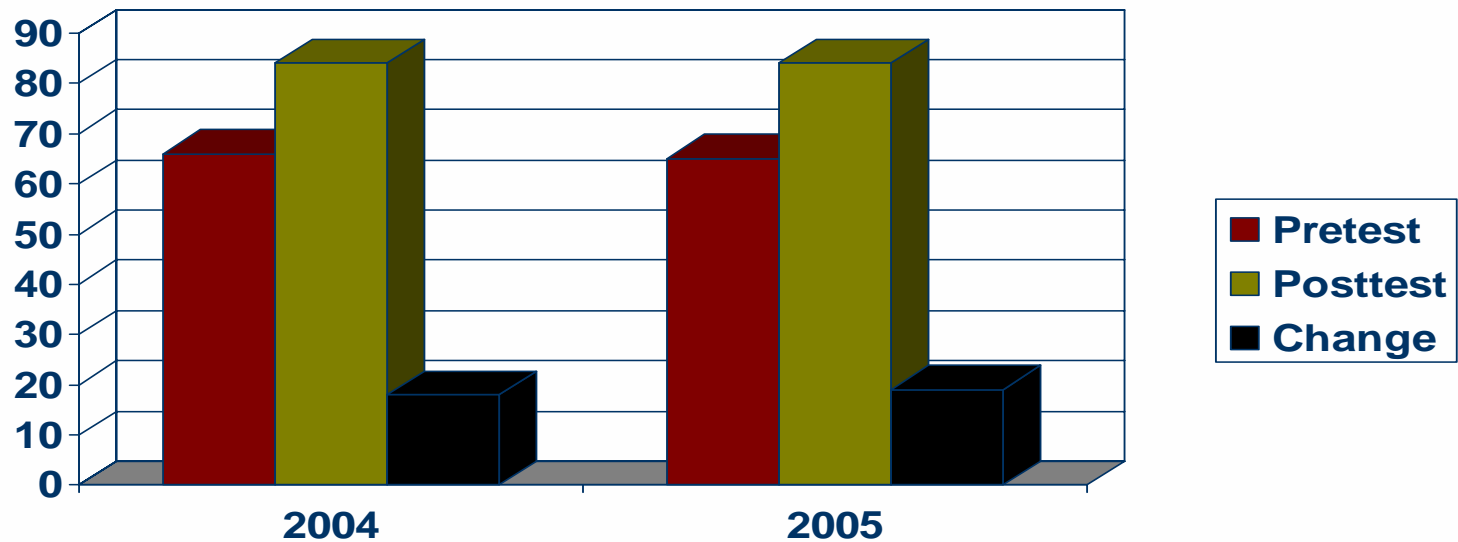
Change over Time: Food Benefits

- There was a drop in post-test score from 2004 to 2005.

Change in Time: TANF

K-TAP scores have remained steady
   over the past two years.

Training Transfer Instrument
(completed 3 months after training by workers and supervisors)

- **Examples of Items that Relate to Social Justice**
  - Helping families move toward self-sufficiency
  - Attitude toward families and vulnerable adults served by the agency
  - Engaging with cultural groups other than one's own
  - Engaging families and community partners in collaborative decision-making
  - Completing timely applications to ensure that the needs of families and children are met
  - Linking clients to community resources
  - Work registration
  - Assisting clients with Child Support claims

Level 3: Training Transfer Food Benefits

3 Month Post-Training Questionnaire

- **Food Benefits Anchors 33 items**
- **Highest Possible Total Score = 231**
  - **Workers Food Benefits as of Feb 1, 2006 (n=5)**
    Mean = 204.4 (SD =18.77), Range = 180-224
  - **Supervisors Food Benefits as of Feb 1, 2006 (n = 5)**
    Mean = 182.2 (SD = 24.18), Range = 149-215)

Level 3: Training Transfer Medicaid

3 Month Post-Training Questionnaire

- **Adult Medical Anchors 31 items**
- **Highest Possible Total Score = 217**
  - **Workers Adult Medical (n=8)**
    Mean = 165.63 (SD = 30.9), Range = 118-204)
  - **Supervisors Adult Medical (n=7)**
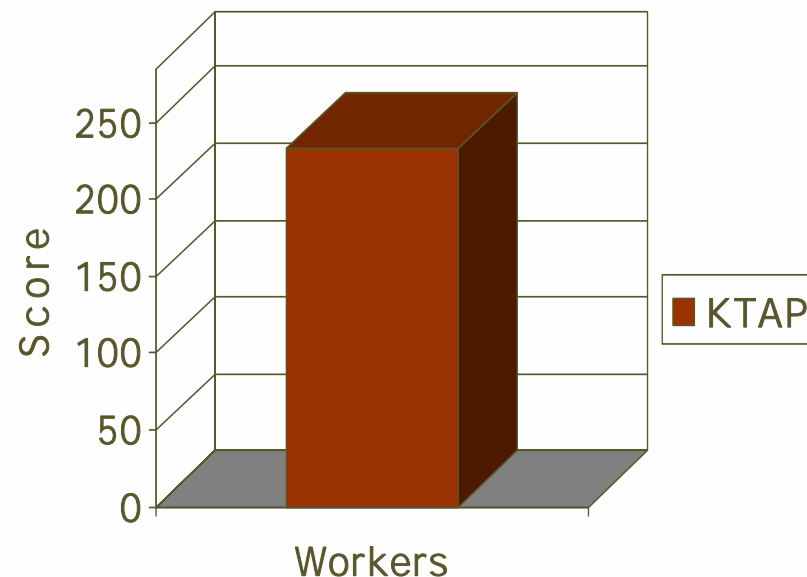   **Mean = 175.57 (SD = 26.9), Range = 137-217**

Level 3: Training Transfer TANF

3 Month Post-Training Questionnaire

- **TANF Anchors 43 items**
- **Highest Possible Total Score = 301**
  - Workers TANF (n=2)

    Mean = 232.5 (SD =74.3), Range = 180-285

Discussion

- This study highlights the importance of technology in training reinforcement.

- Many social work courses do not traditionally utilize technology in the classroom (exceptions: research and statistics).

- Utilizing tools such as Blackboard for testing in the classroom has the potential to impact retention of knowledge gained in training and transfer of learning to the job.

Implications for Social Work Practice

- **When teaching critical social justice material to workforces that have not traditionally incorporated these materials, it is important to have a feedback loop for immediate reinforcement.**

- **Technology can be utilized effectively to facilitate communication and enhance transfer of skills to the field.**

- **This transfer can lead to better casework and outcomes for families served by the agency.**

Future Directions

- **Working to get a higher response rate for the post-training measures**

- **Linking training evaluation to agency outcomes**

- **Continue to utilize technology in the classroom to reinforce learning and promote transfer to the job**